

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 7-11 and 15-19 are currently pending. Claims 4-6 and 12-14 are canceled because the claims from which they depended are amended herein to incorporate the limitation(s) previously specified by Claims 4-6 and 12-14. No new matter has been added herewith.

Obviousness

Claims 1-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mulhall et al. (WO 92/02493) in view of Kushima et al. (JP 63048261).¹ Mulhall et al. discloses a process that employs water, methanol and ethanol as polar solvents, which was in contrast to the use of a polar solvent (C4-15 higher alcohols, polyols and phenols) as was previously claimed in the present application. The Examiner combined Mulhall et al. with Kushima et al., which teaches a process of purifying a crude bisphenol sulfone obtained by dehydrating phenols with sulfuric acid in the presence of one or more solvents selected from hydroxyl group-containing organic compounds (e.g., n-butanol or xylene) and water at 100-200°C for 10min-5hr, then cooled to room temperature.

The Applicants have amended claims by replacing the term "aromatic nonpolar solvent" in Claims 1, 2, 8, 16, 17 and 18 with "mesitylene". In addition, the term "a polar solvent" has been replaced in Claims 1, 2, 7, 8, 15, 16, and 18 with the term "phenol". Thus, the presently claimed invention is limited to the use of phenol as polar solvent and mesitylene as aromatic nonpolar solvent. Neither Mulhall et al. nor Kushima et al. disclose, let alone provide any reason for using mesitylene. Accordingly, the invention cannot be *prima facie* obvious over Mulhall et al. and Kushima et al.

Moreover, the unexpected advantages of using mesitylene in the recited manner are listed in the Specification as filed at page 9, lines 5 to 13. These include: (1) it enables the reaction system to be easily stirred, (2) it allows the resultant dihydroxydiphenylsulfone to be stably precipitated as fine particles, (3) the temperature of the reaction system can be easily controlled, and (4) mesitylene results in the production of high purity 4,4'-dihydroxydiphenylsulfone in high yields. These unexpected advantages further evidence the nonobviousness of the presently claimed invention, and would rebut any *prima facie* showing of obviousness even were such a showing present. Accordingly, removal of the obviousness rejection is respectfully requested.

¹ No mention was made of Claims 16-19 other than that they were indicated as rejected in the Disposition of Claims in the Office Action Summary.

No Disclaimers or Disavowals

Although the present communication may include alterations to the application or claims, or characterizations of claim scope or referenced art, the Applicants are not conceding in this application that previously pending claims are not patentable over the cited references. Rather, any alterations or characterizations are being made to facilitate expeditious prosecution of this application. The Applicants reserve the right to pursue at a later date any previously pending or other broader or narrower claims that capture any subject matter supported by the present disclosure, including subject matter found to be specifically disclaimed herein or by any prior prosecution. Accordingly, reviewers of this or any parent, child or related prosecution history shall not reasonably infer that the Applicants have made any disclaimers or disavowals of any subject matter supported by the present application.

CONCLUSION

In view of Applicants' amendments to the Claims and the foregoing Remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any remaining concerns which might prevent the prompt allowance of the application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number appearing below.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

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